KEIZOKU-SCANS
...and the manga goes on
DO NOT UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES SHARE OUTSIDE OF IRC!

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Cantarella
Story and Art by
YOU HIGURI

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Cantarella

STORY AND ART BY

YOU HIGURI

VOLUME 4

go!comi

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Cantarella 4

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OUR STORY SO FAR AND INTRODUCTION OF CHARACTERS

Enter the forsaken Cesare Borgia, whose soul was sold to the devil by his father, Cardinal Rodrigo, in exchange for the Papal throne. On gaining the office of Cardinal, Cesare plotted to achieve a greater ambition -- uniting all of Italy under one ruler. His schemes were sidetracked when he was kidnapped and tortured by allies of the invading French army. Unable to save his beloved step-mother Vanozza from a cruel death at the hands of marauding soldiers, Cesare withdrew deeper into the darkness haunting his soul; a darkness that now threatens to suck him into the bleakest depths of Hell...

CESARE BORGIA

The hero of our story. His father sold the boy's soul to the devil in exchange for religious power. Now a Cardinal, Cesare will wear the sacred scarlet robe even when his eyes glow golden with wicked intent.

JUAN BORGIA

Unlike his older brother, Juan is favored by his father. Securely ensconced in the Spanish court, Juan leads a decadent, lecherous lifestyle.

LUCREZIA BORGIA

A sweet girl who adores her older brother Cesare. She was forced to wed the Lord of Pesaro in an arranged marriage, but her heart remains loyal to Cesare.

POPE ALEXANDER VI

An ambitious man who sold his own son's soul in exchange for the title of Pope. His birth name was Rodrigo Borgia.

MICHELOTTO (CHIARO)

A legendary assassin. After saving Cesare's life, he now serves him, and goes in public by the false name of Michele da Corella. His true name is Chiaro.

BROTHER...
...HOW ARE YOU FARING?
IF ONLY I COULD HEAR SOME WORD OF YOUR CONDITION.
HOW MANY TIMES MUST I TELL YOU!?
YOU'RE NOT TO BARGE INTO MY ROOM! YOU'RE DRUNK AGAIN, AREN'T YOU?
HIS HOLINESS THE POPE IS ABOUT TO FALL TO THE FRENCH ARMY!
LOOKS LIKE HE WAS BACKSTABBED BY HIS OWN ALLIES IN ROME, THE ORSINIS AND COLONNAS.
What a lousy time to be his ally!
LUCRE-ZIA!
IS LUCREZIA HERE?
SLAM
GASP
M...
MAS-TER.

Pesaro
I JUST WANT TO WATCH ...
...A LITTLE LONGER FOR AN ENVOY BEARING NEWS FROM HOME.
...AND YET ALL I CAN DO IS WAIT FOR TIME TO PASS IN THIS REMOTE COUNTRYSIDE. IT PAINS ME SO...
I'M FINE.
LADY LUCREZIA! IN SUCH LIGHT ATTIRE, YOU'LL SURELY CATCH A COLD OUT HERE. PLEASE COME INSIDE.
I KNOW, THAT EVEN AS I SPEAK, ROME IS SUFFER-ING AT THE HANDS OF THE FRENCH ARMY...

!
NO! LET GO OF ME!!
SCRATCH
I HATE YOU!!
AH!
I CAN'T LET THIS OPPORTUNITY SLIP THROUGH MY FINGERS.
YOUR FATHER IS TOO BUSY TO KEEP AN EYE ON ME NOW.
DID YOU REALLY THINK I WOULDN'T NOTICE YOU GIVING INFORMATION TO THE MILAN ENVOYS BEHIND MY FATHER'S BACK?
...BUT YOU TOO, GIOVANNI, ARE A SNAKE IN THE GRASS.
ORSINI MAY BE A BACK-STABBER ...
IF YOU COME ANY NEARER, I'LL BITE MY OWN TONGUE OFF.

CRASH
QUIET! YOU INSOLENT WENCH!
AAH!
EE!
YOU MOODY LITTLE LADY AND YOUR HIGH-HORSE ATTITUDE. YOU'RE MY WIFE, REMEMBER!
YOU'RE HURTING ME!
MASTER, PLEASE STOP USING FORCE!
I SWEAR, YOU BORGIA BRATS...
...HAVE MOCKED ME LONG ENOUGH!
YOU'VE MANAGED TO PUT ONE OBSTACLE OR ANOTHER BEFORE ME...
...SO THAT I HAVEN'T EVEN BEEN ABLE TO LAY WITH YOU, MY OWN WIFE!

YOU ACT LIKE YOU'RE AN INNOCENT CHILD, YOU WHORE!
BUT YOU SHOULD SEE THE LOOK YOU GET ON YOUR FACE WHEN YOU LAY EYES ON CESARE!
I HAVE, PLENTY OF TIMES.
SO ONLY YOUR OWN SIBLING CAN PLEASE YOU BEST, IS THAT HOW IT WORKS?
SHOVE
BASTARD!
Ha ha ha!
IN THAT COLD CASTLE MADE OF STONE, THE ONLY ONE I COULD RELY ON WAS MY BROTHER.
BROTHER!
BROTHER!
OFTEN I WOULD SLIP AWAY FROM MY ROOM AND SEEK HIM OUT IN TEARS.

IF YOU WANT TO HAVE ME SO BADLY...
...YOU CAN SLEEP WITH MY DEAD BODY.
!
!
HEH.
AND THOUGH ENTRUSTED WITH DIRECTING NAPLES' REINFORCEMENTS, THE MOMENT THINGS GOT BAD, YOU RAN RIGHT BACK HOME LIKE A DOG WITH HIS TAIL BETWEEN HIS LEGS.
!
HOW AM I SUPPOSED TO ACCEPT BEING SUCH A MAN'S WIFE?
HMPH
IN OTHER WORDS ...
...YOU DON'T WANT TO SLEEP WITH ANYONE BUT CESARE.
!?

DASH
HEY!
CESARE !!
BECAUSE OF MY ARDENT DESIRE TO SEE MY BELOVED BROTHER, I DID NOT FEAR FALLING ON THE HARD STONE GROUND.
MY BROTHER WAS PUNISHED WITH THE WHIP FOR MY BEHAVIOR...
LASH!
LASH!

ONE DAY I CAUGHT A GLIMPSE OF HIM AFTER FAR TOO MANY DAYS OF SEPARATION. I CALLED OUT BUT HE WAS TOO FOCUSED ON HIS SWORDSMANSHIP TO HEAR ME.
BROTHER!
BROTHER!
UMPH!
MPH!
CLANG
CLANG
BROTHER!!

MY LADY!
THE LONG-AWAITED MESSENGER FROM THE VATICAN HAS ARRIVED!
I DON'T WANT THESE FEELINGS TO BE DISHONORED BY ANYONE!
SO YOU MEAN...
...MY BROTHER SAFELY FLED FROM THE FRENCH ARMY?
YES.
KING CHARLES DISPENSED A SEARCH TEAM TO SCOUR THE SURROUNDING AREA BUT...
...HAS NOT TURNED UP ANYTHING YET.
AND WHEN HE OPENED UP ALL THE CHESTS MASTER CESARE HAD LEFT BEHIND...

HIS HAND WAS COVERED IN BRUISES. AND THE BANDAGES BELOW HIS KNEE WERE STILL SOAKED WITH BLOOD.
HE HAD USED HIS BODY AS A CUSHION WHEN HE'D CAUGHT ME.
STROKE
SOB
SOB
HIC-CUP SOB
I'M SORRY. I'M SORRY, BROTHER.
IT MUST'VE BEEN FROM THAT VERY DAY THAT NOTHING BESIDES THIS CHIVALROUS BOY'S FACE... TRULY AND DEFINITELY NOTHING ELSE AT ALL... FOUND A PLACE IN MY EYES.

HE MUST BE IN HIDING FOR A REASON.
M' LADY ..
...ALL I KNOW IS THAT HE WAS LAST SEEN IN SPOLETO.
I SEE.
I KNOW THAT HE IS SAFE
THAT'S ALL I NEEDED TO HEAR!
CLICK
...IF ONLY I HAD WINGS, I WOULD FLY AWAY FROM HERE...
BUT...

.. WAS FOUND DEAD FROM AN ILLNESS OF UNKNOWN ORIGIN.
SHORTLY AFTER, ANOTHER HOSTAGE, PRINCE DJEM...
RUMORS ARE THAT MASTER CESARE HIMSELF ADMINISTERED POISON TO THE PRINCE.
OH MY!
I SUPPOSE MY BROTHER HAD BEEN PLANNING THAT ALL ALONG THEN...
IT SEEMS THAT WAY.
...THEY WERE FILLED WITH... NOTHING BUT RUBBISH!
THEN ...
THEN DO YOU KNOW WHERE MY BROTHER IS NOW?
INDEED, THERE IS NO SOLID EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT THE CLAIM SO THE MATTER IS STILL HAZY.
IN THE MEANTIME, KING CHARLES HAS RELUCTANTLY PRESSED ON TO NAPLES WITHOUT HIS PRISONER.
I SEE. MY BROTHER WOULD NEVER KILL IF IT WASN'T FOR A GOOD REASON.
AND HE'S GOT NOTHING TO GAIN FROM THE PRINCE'S DEATH IT MUST BE MERE COINCIDENCE!

Rome
...TO WHEREVER YOU ARE.
CLACK
REALLY
HOW MUCH FARTHER IS IT, BARTOLOMEO?
WHO COULD POSSIBLY SAY HE WISHES TO SEE ME IN A PLACE LIKE THIS?
JUST A LITTLE FURTHER.
PLEASE BE PATIENT.
CESARE!
I WILL BE DEPARTING SOON.
BUT BEFORE THAT, I NEEDED TO ASK A FAVOR OF YOU.
WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?
I APOLOGIZE FOR HAVING TO DRAG YOU DOWN HERE. PLEASE FORGIVE ME.
I DID NOT WISH TO ATTRACT ATTENTION.
AS WE SPEAK, THE FRENCH KING IS HEADING SOUTH TOWARDS NAPLES.
HOWEVER, YOU KNOW THAT YOU CANNOT ALLOW HIM TO REACH HIS GOAL
BECAUSE ...
!?
...YOU AS HIS HOLINESS THE POPE CANNOT ASSENT TO CHARLES GAINING THE NAPLES THRONE.

!!
LET US SEIZE THIS CHANCE...
WILL YOU LET SUCH AN OPPORTUNITY PASS YOU BY?
SO THE REASON HE EGGED ON THE FRENCH ADVANCE WAS FOR THIS?
...TO UNIFY ITALY UNDER THE VATICAN'S NAME.
Count on him to rush off some thing like this.
PLEASE
...CALL OUT TO THE NATION-STATES, YOUR HOLINESS.

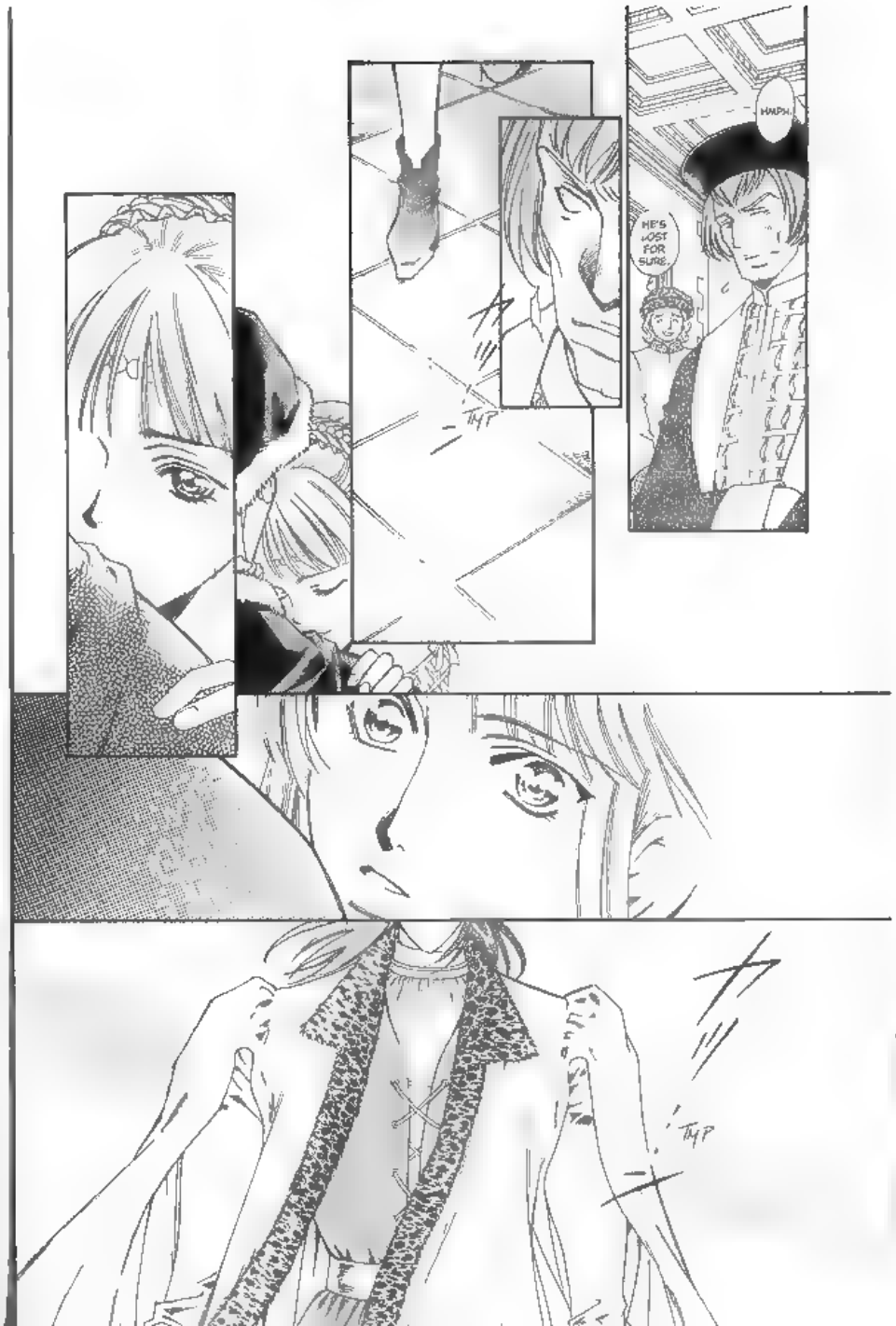
A SACRED ALLIANCE!

PLEASE FLEE.
GO AS FAR AWAY AS YOU CAN...
.UNTIL THE TIME COMES FOR YOUR RETURN.
THE TIME FOR MY RETURN ?
BUT IF HE BEARS DOWN ON US MERCILESSLY, WE WON'T BE ABLE TO WITHSTAND HIM. RIGHT NOW, CHARLES' POWER IS AN OVERWHELMING FORCE.
WHEN YOU WILL CREATE A SACRED ALLIANCE WITH THE VATICAN AT ITS CENTER.
ITALY'S MANY NATION-STATES SHARED A COMMON PAIN WHEN THE FRENCH TROOPS WERE ADVANCING. THERE WILL NOT BE A SINGLE NATION-STATE THAT WILL NOT RESPOND TO YOUR CALL.

Perugia
For the next two months, Cesare's whereabouts were completely unknown.
That is, to everyone besides Pope Alexander VI.
DASH
HM.
IT IS AN HONOR TO HAVE YOU, YOUR EMINENCE ALEXANDER VI.
I AM MOST BLESSED TO BE IN YOUR PRESENCE
I, GIAMPAOLO BAGLIONI, FEEL PRIVILEGED TO HAVE SUCH AN OPPORTUNITY
MY BEST REGARDS, DUKE OF BAGLIONI.
I'LL BE STAYING HERE FOR A WHILE.

YES, M'LORD
LET'S INCREASE THE PACE TO A FORCED MARCH
QUICKLY!
VOLPE. CHIARO.

WHAT'S THE MATTER?
LORD OF PESARO.
THAT OLD FART!
HMM...
CALL LUCREZIA TO ME! NOW!
MY WORDING MIGHT BE OFF...
..BUT THAT'S PRETTY MUCH WHAT OCCURRED
I HAVE TO KEEP UP THIS SUBMISSIVE ATTITUDE FOR A LITTLE WHILE LONGER.
HE SAID THAT IF I DON'T BRING YOU TO HIM IMMEDIATELY, I'LL BE EXCOMMUNICATED!
YES.
READY YOURSELF FOR THE TRIP!
THAT BLASTED FATHER AND DAUGHTER MAKE MY BLOOD BOIL BUT I CAN'T AFFORD TO LOSE THE SUPPORT OF THE POPE!
WHAT?
GO TO MY FATHER AT PERUGIA?
Glow
...ARE JOINING FORCES IN ORDER TO BRING DOWN THE FRENCH ARMY.
IT SEEMS THAT THE RUMORS ARE TRUE. ITALY, SPAIN, AND HOLY ROME...
.. AND THE POPE CAME HERE TO GET AWAY FROM HIM.
I HEAR KING CHARLES TRIED TO CHASE DOWN THE POPE TO GET HIS CONSENT TO BE KING OF NAPLES...
YEAH.
IT SEEMS MILAN AND VENICE HAVE ALREADY BEGUN TO ADVANCE.
OH WELL, THIS PLACE IS UNDER THE POPE'S JURISDICTION.
HMM
IT FEELS LIKE THE WHOLE VATICAN'S RELOCATED HERE
THIS IS THE FIRST TIME I'VE EVER SEEN SO MANY CARDINALS.
WOW! WHAT A MAGNIFICENT DISPLAY!
A TRULY SUPERIOR SPECIAL ENVOY
THAT'S BECAUSE THE POPE SENT
THINGS ARE STARTING TO CHANGE, EVEN THOUGH THERE HAVE ONLY BEEN A COUPLE OF SMALL SKIRMISHES.
IT'S HARD TO BELIEVE, BUT.
...AND WITH HIS SOPHISTRY AND CAJOLERY SEDUCED THEM.
HE WANDERED THE NATION-STATES..


HMPH.
HE'S LOST FOR SURE.
THP
THP

THERE!
YOU'VE GROWN EVEN MORE BEAUTIFUL SINCE LAST WE MET
OH!
IT'S BEEN SO LONG, LUCREZIA.
PLEASE LET YOUR OLD MAN SEE YOUR LOVELY FACE!
OH FATHER!
I MISSED YOU SO!
FATHER!
POOR THING
I LEFT YOU ALONE FOR SO LONG.

LUCREZIA.

I CAN'T DO THIS. I LET MY EMOTIONS GET THE BETTER OF ME BEFORE COMPANY.
I'M GLAD ... YOU'RE SAFE.
THESE FEELINGS ARE TO BE KEPT SAFELY WITHIN THE DOMAIN OF MY OWN HEART.
I WILL NOT ALLOW ANYONE TO ENCROACH ON THEM. I WILL REVEAL THEM TO NO ONE!
HMPH.
THEY ACT JUST LIKE REUNITED LOVERS.
YOU HAVEN'T CHANGED A BIT.
BROTHER.
DEAR BRO-THER...
BROTHER.
PUSH

NEAR FORNOVO, THE FRENCH TROOPS ENGAGED IN BATTLE WITH ALL ED ARMIES IN ONE SHORT HOUR, THE FRENCH RETREATED FROM THE BATTLE-GROUND AND CHARLES VIII FLED BACK TO FRANCE.
FORGIVE MY INTER-RUPTION DURING YOUR MEAL. BUT..
SHE'S BEAUTIFUL.
PARDON MY LACK OF MAN-NERS.
I HAVEN'T PROPERLY INTRODUCED MYSELF YET. I'M BAGLIONI'S LITTLE SISTER, PENTAZZARIA.
PLEASE RELAX AND MAKE YOURSELF AT HOME TONIGHT.
THANK YOU VERY MUCH.
OOF.
THEN THE ALLIED ARMIES ...
...HAVE WON A GLORIOUS VICTORY!

Man. she's cute when her cheeks turn pink
(BLUSH)
DOES THE... ...FOOD NOT PLEASE YOUR PALETTE?
OH DEAR.
THAT WON'T DO.
OH ...
NO, IT'S JUST I'M NOT USED TO TRAVELING AND I GUESS I'M A LITTLE TIRED.

THE FACT THAT THEY DON'T SEE THIS AS A CRISIS
IS THE BIGGEST CRISIS OF ALL.
EXACTLY, VOLPE.
BUT...
HOW COULD THEY HAVE BEEN SO BLINDED BY THEIR OWN GAIN AS TO LET THE FRENCH ARMY SLIP AWAY!?
WHY DID I WASTE ALL THAT ENERGY ...ROUNDING UP THE NATION-STATES IN PREPARATION?
A CARDINAL CANNOT VERY WELL CUT THE VANGUARD OF A BATTLE. NO MATTER HOW MUCH SCHEMING HE DOES.
WITH THE LIMITED POWER I HAVE NOW--IT'S HUMILIATING TO SAY SUCH A THING--THIS IS AS FAR AS I CAN GO.
THE SCARLET ROBE THAT EVERYONE ENVIES AS PROOF OF ONE'S GREAT POWER...
NOT AS LONG AS THE ONE WHO CAN PUT HIS PLANS INTO EFFECT IS INCOMPETENT!!
WHAT VICTORY!?
DIDN'T THEY HEAR THAT CHARLES CROSSED THE ALPS!?
CESARE.
CALM DOWN. YOU'RE NOT ACTING LIKE YOURSELF
IT'S ALL SO RIDICULOUS IT MAKES ME SICK!
THE ALLIES WERE SO CONCERNED WITH PLUNDERING THE TREASURE THAT THE FRENCH ARMY WAS CARRYING THAT IN THE MIDST OF THE CHAOS, THEY LET HIM MAKE A CLEAN GET-AWAY! THAT'S THE BLARING TRUTH BEHIND IT ALL!

I FOLLOW A STRICT CODE OF ABSTINENCE FROM LIQUOR.
IF YOU'LL EXCUSE ME.
CHIA-RO..
WON'T YOU BRING US SOMETHING TO DRINK?
SURE THING
WHAT'S THE MATTER, VOLPE? YOU NEVER STAY WITH ME.
I don't like that kind of person
WHOA..
SLOW DOWN, CESARE
SAME AS ALWAYS.
YOU JUST CAN'T BREAK THROUGH THAT GUY'S COLD EXTERIOR.
CHIARO.

FOR YOU, CESARE, HAS IT BECOME A FORM OF SHACKLES INSTEAD?
AREN'T YOU THE RE.-GIOUS FANA-TIC
YOU ALONE ARE THE VESSEL OF THE LORD OF LORDS.
WHAT-EVER YOU WISH...
...I WILL SUCCEED IN DOING.
Heh
BUT I WILL...
..RE-MEMBER THOSE WORDS.
MY LORD...

IF I TURNED MY BODY AND SOUL OVER TO THE DEMONIC POWER, I COULD END ALL MY SUFFERING.
....S THE THOUGHT THAT DEEP DOWN IN MY HEART, I ACTUALLY DESIRE TO SUCCUMB.
BUT RIGHT NOW ..
...THE SCARIEST THING FOR ME...
THAT'S WHY I FEARED BEING NEAR HIM.
THAT'S RIGHT
I'M THE SAME AS PRINCE DJEM, WHO SECRETLY ..ONGED FOR THE COMFORTING EMBRACE OF DEATH
...HAVE ACCOMPLISHED NOTHING!
CAESAR... THAT ANCIENT RULER SO LIKE ME!
I, TOO..
THEY SAY THAT THE MIGHTY CAESAR ONCE SAID...
"GREAT KING ALEXANDER WAS MY AGE WHEN HE BECAME RULER OF THE WORLD.
I HAVE NOT YET ACCOMPLISHED ANYTHING."
IF IT WEREN'T FOR VANOZZA ...
...I MIGHT NOT EVEN *HAVE* THIS HUMAN BODY.
I DON'T KNOW WHEN IT WILL AT LAST GIVE IN TO THE DEMONS.
IT'S MY BODY.
WHAT ...
...ARE YOU IN SUCH A HURRY FOR?

I DIDN'T TELL YOU JUST TO HAVE YOU APOLOGIZE.
DON'T YOU FEEL HE'S A LITTLE UNTRUSTWORTHY?
I..
...SLEPT WITH HIM.
YOU FOOL.
I WAS JOKING.
I JUST WANTED TO SEE HOW YOU'D REACT.
UGH! NOT AGAIN!
YOU'VE GOT A SICK SENSE OF HUMOR
I GUESS.
Hmph

AFTER YOU SLIPPED OUT OF CHARLES' PLACE, YOU WERE HIT WITH A BAD FEVER AND COLLAPSED, REMEMBER?
BUT YOU ARE SICKLY.
And to make matters worse, you cut your self!
AND THEN WHEN YOU SAID TO VOLPE "AS LONG AS YOU'RE FOLLOWING ME," YOU GOT PUNCHED RIGHT IN THE FACE.
DON'T TREAT YOUR GRAND CARDINAL LIKE A SICKLY BIRD.
YOU'RE FINALLY LETTING YOURSELF GET WELL.
TALKING LIKE THIS IS YOUR WAY OF HEALING YOURSELF.
YOUR HEART IS JUST SHAKEN UP BECAUSE OF WHAT HAPPENED TO VANOZZA.
I GOT PUNCHED!? WHEN!?
RIGHT AFTER YOU TEASED HIM, I THINK..
A beautiful guy's life rests on his beauty he once Sheesh
SORRY
.....
hadn't realized

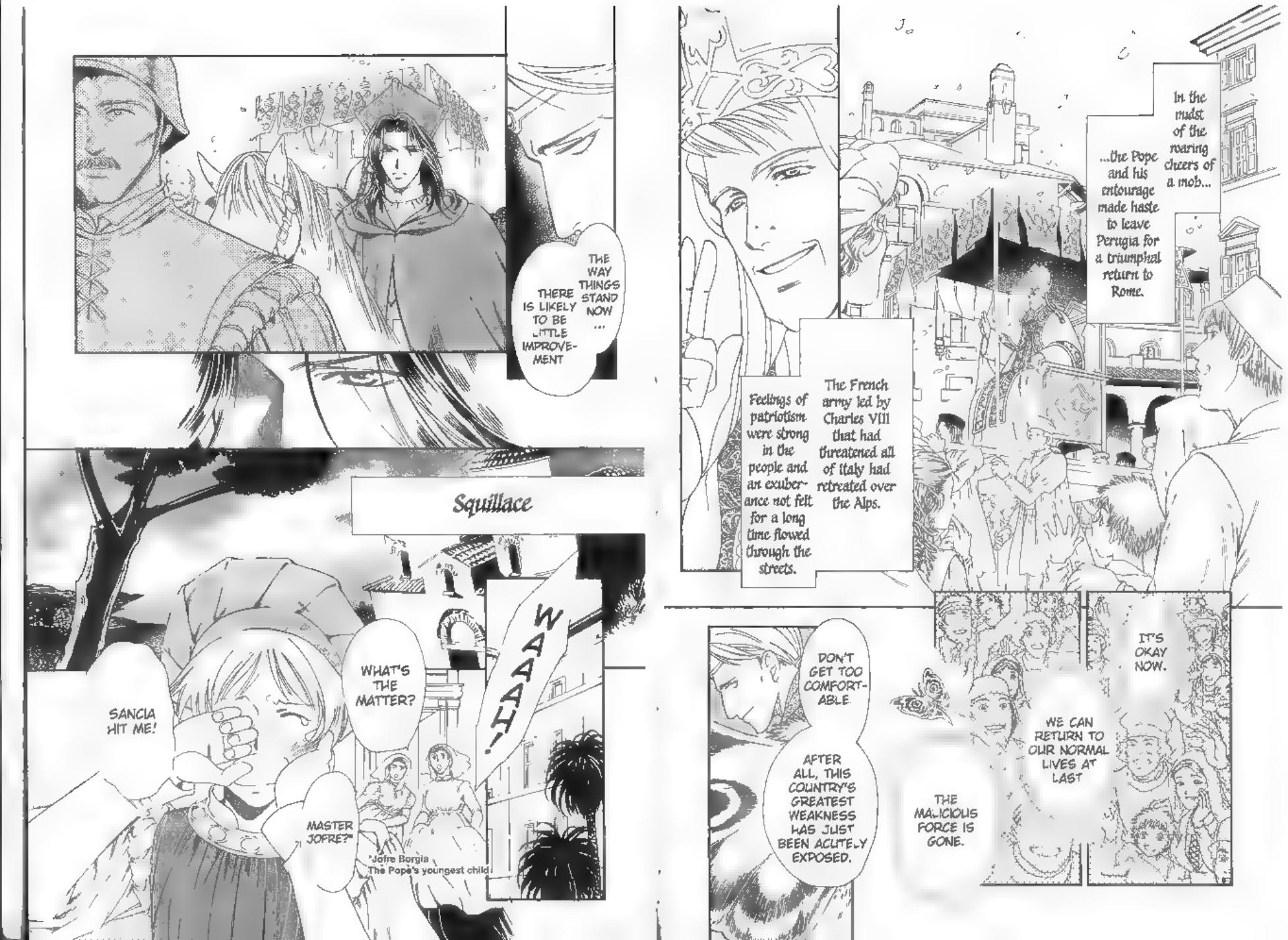
!?
WH...
WHAT WAS THAT JUST NOW!?

IT'S PITCH-BLACK I CAN'T SEE A THING.
I GUESS TONIGHT'S A NEW MOON.
HEY.
WHERE ARE YOU GOING NOW?
TO SOBER UP.
COME.
WHAT THE --?
WHERE'D YOU GO, CESARE?

PERK
HEE HEE HEE
TAP
WALKING THROUGH AN UNFAMILIAR HOUSE IN THE DARK OF NIGHT IS SCARY.
CLACK
PEOPLE'S MUDDLED VOICES...
WHERE ARE THEY COMING FROM?
WHAT IS THAT?
BRO-THER? WHAT COULD HAVE HAPPENED TO HIM? HE LOOKS EXHAUSTED ...
PERK
BRO-
HE'S GONE...

PENTAZ-ZARIA AND BAGLIONI!!
THEY'RE BROTHER AND SISTER! HOW COULD THEY DO SUCH A THING!?
WHO'S THERE?
I'M HORRIFIED BY THEIR BEHAVIOR!
A LIGHT...
CLATTER
AH!

I'VE FINALLY BEEN FORCED TO ACKNOWL-EDGE WHAT I'VE ALWAYS DESIRED...
I'VE DISGRACED MY OWN SACRED FEELINGS!
NO..
ZOOOO!
WHAT A TWISTED HEART I HAVE.
BECAUSE THE MOMENT I SAW THOSE TWO WITH EACH OTHER, I IMAGINED DOING THE SAME THING WITH MY OWN BROTHER!


THE WAY THINGS STAND NOW ...
THERE IS LIKELY TO BE LITTLE IMPROVE-MENT
Squillace
SANCIA HIT ME!
WHAT'S THE MATTER?
MASTER JOFRE?"
*Jofre Borgia
The Pope's youngest child
-HAAW
Feelings of patriotism were strong in the people and an exuberance not felt for a long time flowed through the streets.
The French army led by Charles VIII that had threatened all of Italy had retreated over the Alps.
...the Pope and his entourage made haste to leave Perugia for a triumphal return to Rome.
In the midst of the roaring cheers of a mob...
DON'T GET TOO COMFORT-ABLE.
AFTER ALL, THIS COUNTRY'S GREATEST WEAKNESS HAS JUST BEEN ACUTELY EXPOSED.
THE MALICIOUS FORCE IS GONE.
WE CAN RETURN TO OUR NORMAL LIVES AT LAST
IT'S OKAY NOW.

M...
MY PLEA-SURE!
OH NO!
POOR LITTLE SANCIA CAN'T GET BACK DOWN.
WON'T SOMEBODY PLEASE HELP ME?
JUST LOOK. WITH MY CHARM, I CAN BRING ANY-MAN-TO HIS KNEES BEFORE ME.
peek
EVEN SO...
...IT'S A TRAGEDY THAT THAT CHILD IS MY HUSBAND!
ROME?
WE'RE GOING TO ROME?

I NEED A CHANGE OF ATMO-SPHERE.
DON'T FOLLOW ME OUT!
OH.
LADY SANCIA, WHERE ARE YOU GOING?
UGH!
THAT'S WHAT YOU GET, YOU GLOOMY BRAT!
There, there
AAW, YOU POOR DEAR.
ONE WITH TOLERANCE, BRAINS AND EXTRAORDINARY LOOKS TO BOOT.
I PREFER A MORE PASSIONATE AND MANLY MAN.
COME DOWN AT ONCE!
!
AH!
LADY SANCIA, IT'S DANGEROUS FOR YOU TO BE CLIMBING TREES!

UH-OH...
RUMOR HAS IT HE'S A VERY HANDSOME MAN.
SPARKLE
SPARKLE
THAT'S IT
CESARE BORGIA.
HA HA HA!
MORE WINE! BRING OUT MORE WINE!
LISTEN!
I'M COUNT OF PESARO, YA' KNOW THAT!? HAVE A L.L' MORE RESPECT!
SO HE'S SOME PEASANT LORD OR SOMETHING?
PESARO? WHERE'S THAT?
YUCK, WHAT A BRUTE.
HE'S SLOBBERING DRUNK.
Worse than a French soldier
WHADJU SAY!?

BUT ...
I... I'M...
Smother
YOU'RE ABSOLUTELY RIGHT
I'M SURE THE HOLY FATHER WILL BE THRILLED.
YES.
HIS HOLINESS HAS SAID HE WISHES TO SEE THE TWO OF YOU AS HUSBAND AND WIFE.
...THERE IS CAUSE FOR A CELEBRATION TO REUNITE LONG-DEPARTED CHILDREN WITH THEIR PARENTS RIGHT, SIGNORE JOFRE?
AND WITH THE WAR FINALLY SUBSIDING
WHY NOW OF ALL TIMES?
BUT MY FATHER HARDLY CARES FOR ME...
AH, YES...
YOUR OLDER BROTHER IS IN ROME AS WELL.
What was his name?
YES, IT 'S!
THAT SO?
IT'S OBVIOUS IT'S BECAUSE...
...HE WISHES TO SPY ON MY BEAUTY!

OPPOR-TUNE?
FA-THER.
THE OPPORTUNE MOMENT MAY HAVE ARRIVED
. EVEN THOUGH HE UNDOUBTED-LY FED THEM VALUABLE INFORMATION ABOUT US.
THAT MAN'S USEFULNESS IS OVER. FOR A WHILE HE TURNED THE SFORZAS OF MILAN INTO POWERFUL ALLIES...
...BUT NOW HE'S NOTHING BUT A USELESS LOAD TO US.
AND TO TOP IT OFF, HE'S GOT A BAD ATTITUDE.
PLEASE
..EAVE IT TO ME
WHAT DO YOU SUGGEST WE DO?
STILL, GIOVANNI .. IS LUCRE-ZIA'S HUS-BAND.

CHAT FA #17.
THOUGH I GOT'A SAY IT MAKES FOR AN INTER-ESTING STORY!
WHAT NON-SENSE ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?
SLAM
IT'S TRUE!!
...SHE'S GETTIN' IT ON WITH TH' POPE HISSELF! HA!
OH YEAH! I BET...
THE POPE'S LIL' GIRL, LUCREZIA SHE'S A REEAL BITCH.
AND SHE'S MY WIFE BUT SHE'S GETTIN' IT ON WITH HER BRUTHER.
EEP!
HEY, YOU.
HAVEN' YA' HEARD? THE BORGIAS ARE INCESSTUS!
I'M LORD GIOVANNI S'FORZA OF PESARO!!
I'D KNOW! I'M TH' POPE'S SON-IN-LAW!
WHAT UTTER NONSENSE.
... COULD BE THREAT-ENED BY SUCH ALARMING CLAIMS.
THE SANCTITY OF THE VATICAN ITSELF
YOUR HOL-NESS.
SUCH FALSE RUMORS ARE MAKING THEIR WAY AROUND

...BUT...
HM?
B...BROTHER.
IT MIGHT BE MORE IN OUR FAVOR TO WAIT UNTIL...
...WE'VE GATHERED SOME SUITORS TO REPLACE GIOVANNI.
IF YOU SAY SO, FATHER.
WHY NOT TAKE MEASURES TO WIN HIM OVER TO OUR SIDE AND KEEP AN EYE ON HIM A LITTLE LONGER?
IF HE DIES NOW, I'LL BE THE MAIN SUSPECT.
HM.
WAIT.
WE SHOULDN'T AGGRAVATE THE SITUATION.
IF SO, IN THAT CASE. YOU'LL EXCUSE ME.
LUCREZIA.
I FEEL YOUR PAIN...
A TOOL IN POLITICAL MARRIAGES--- IS THAT ALWAYS WHAT WOMEN END UP SERVING AS?

PLEASE STOP TREMB..NG
I'LL ALWAYS PROTECT YOU. REMEMBER THAT.
I'M SO WRETCHED...
ABSOLUTELY WRETCHED!
WHY DOES MY HEART BEAT SO FAST EVEN NOW?
LUCREZIA.
BENEATH THIS SMILING MASK, I KNOW...
YOU'RE CRYING AGAIN.
EVEN THE SMALLEST OF HUMAN EMOTIONS IS WASHED AWAY BY THE COLD BLOOD IN MY VEINS.
PLEASE DON'T FRET.
WE'L.. EXTINGUISH THOSE RUMORS SOON.
...THAT I HAVE THE CONVICTION TO TRAMPLE YOUR HEART WITH EASE.
RUMORS? I'M NOT WORRIED ABOUT SUCH COMPLETELY UNFOUNDED GOSSIP.
!
LUCREZIA.

...THAT YOU'RE IN LOVE WITH YOUR BROTHER.
MY FEMININE INSTINCT IMMEDIATELY TOLD ME...
I WAS TAKING A WALK.
...WHEN I HAPPENED TO OVERHEAR YOUR CONVERSATION.
SANCIA D'ARAGON. THEN YOU'RE JOFRE'S-
THAT'S RIGHT. I'M YOUR SISTER-IN-LAW.
I'VE COME HERE TO MAKE THE POPE'S ACQUAINTANCE. IT'S A PLEASURE TO MEET YOU.
!
WHO COULD BLAME YOU FOR FALLING FOR SUCH A FINE MAN?
THERE'S NO NEED TO HIDE IT
AND YET, YOU'RE HIS SISTER BY BLOOD. ISN'T THAT WHAT THEY CALL "INCEST"?
It's rampant in royal families these days.

WHY DOES IT ACHE SO?
START LE
HMM.
SUCH A KIND BROTHER YOU HAVE.
WH... WHO ARE YOU!?
OH, I'M SORRY. LET ME INTRODUCE MYSELF
I AM SANCIA D'ARAGON.
YOU'RE LUCREZIA, RIGHT? I COULD TELL FROM YOUR BLONDE HAIR. IT'S JUST LIKE THE RUMORS SAY

SO YOU DON'T CARE?
THEN I'D BETTER NOT HEAR ANY COMPLAINTS FROM YOU WHEN I TAKE HIM.
DO WHAT-EVER YOU WANT!
THOUGH I MUST WARN YOU, MY BROTHER WON'T FALL SO EASILY FOR A LOW-CLASS WOMAN LIKE YOU!
YOU'RE SO IRRESOLUTE, LUCREZIA...
WASN'T I JUST ABOUT TO GIVE HIM UP ANYWAY?
THAT'S OF NO CONCERN TO ME!
GNAW
COULD HE HAVE LEFT ALREADY?
THIS S THE ONLY EXIT FROM THESE HALLS.
LET'S SEE.
I COULD'VE SWORN

IS THAT HOW YOU FEEL ABOUT IT?
THEN YOU WON'T MIND ME HAVING A GO AT HIM?
THAT ...
THAT'D BE IMMORAL!
WHO DOES THIS WOMAN THINK SHE IS!?
Grin
AH.
DID I HIT A NERVE? SORRY.
TURN

I SUPPOSE YOU'LL JUST HAVE TO FIND THAT OUT YOURSELF
HOW WERE YOU PLANNING TO HAVE A GO AT ME, LADY SANCIA?
STARTLE
AH!
YOU KNOW ...
...IF YOU PLAY WITH FIRE, YOU'RE GOING TO GET BURNED.
BE A GOOD GIRL AND GO BACK TO YOUR JOFRE.
YOU'RE NOT IN NAPLES ANYMORE.
BECAUSE I'M GOING TO PUT MY WHOLE BEING INTO IT!
FINE. IF THAT'S HOW YOU WANNA PLAY. .. ...I'LL WIN YOU NO MATTER WHAT!
WHAT'S WITH THAT GUY? HE PISSES ME OFF!
EEK!
YOU SCARED ME! WHAT'RE YOU DOING HIDING THERE?
AND HOW DO YOU KNOW MY NAME?
WHO..
.ARE YOU LOOKING FOR, LADY SANCIA?
I WAS TAKING A WALK WHEN I HAPPENED TO OVER-HEAR YOUR CONVER-SATION.
SOUND FAMILIAR? THOUGH I WASN'T AWARE THAT FOLLOWING SOMEONE CONSTITUTED TAKING A WALK.
YOU WERE EAVES-DROPPING !?
YOU RUDE MAN!
!
HA!
YOU'RE ONE TO TALK.
MY!
YOU'VE GOT A VERY DIFFERENT ATTITUDE AWAY FROM LUCREZIA!
WHICH ONE'S THE REAL YOU?

MICHELOTTO
SO THIS IS WHERE YOU'VE BEEN. I'VE BEEN LOOKING FOR YOU.
OH
MONSIEUR DELLA VOLPE
I SURRENDER.
Dammit.
HEH.
YOU'VE STILL GOT A LONG WAY TO GO, MY FRIEND.
SO I SHOULD BE SHARING MY EXPERTISE ONLY WITH THE SUPERIOR SWORDSMEN WHO'RE LOYAL TO YOU?
Your guys are too dark for my taste.
FOR THE RIGHT AMOUNT OF MONEY THEY'LL BE YOUR ALLY-- OR YOUR ENEMY!
WHAT A WASTE OF TIME THOSE MERCENARIES ARE!
WE'LL GET HIM NEXT TIME!
HE'S TOO DARN FAST!
UGH, THAT SUCKED! I COULDN'T GET A SINGLE SWING IN!
WHAT HAVE YOU BEEN UP TO?
BUT WHAT WOULD BE THE POINT? THEY'RE SUPERIOR SO THEY DON'T NEED MY INSTRUCTION.
ANYWAY, WHAT'D YOU CALL ME FOR?
THEY'RE NOT THE KIND OF MEN YOU SHOULD BE SHARING YOUR EXPERTISE WITH.
Glad you showed up. I was getting bored.
WELL, THE GUYS ASKED ME TO ENGAGE IN A LITTLE SWORD PRACTICE.

CLANG
HAH!
WAH!

MASTER CESARE ASKED FOR YOU.
OH...
I BROUGHT CHIARO.
UH... OKAY
AH, THANK YOU
VOLPE, NOW IF YOU'LL DO AS I INSTRUCTED EARLIER..
WHAT AM I GETTING SO FLUSTERED OVER?
YES SIR
IF YOU'LL EXCUSE ME.
I NEED HIM TO GO ON A LITTLE EXPEDITION FOR ME.
LOOKS LIKE SOMEBODY'S IN A HURRY.
IT'S NO GOOD. I CAN'T LOOK HIM STRAIGHT IN THE EYE...
THE AIR'S SO THICK YOU COULD CUT IT WITH A KNIFE.
UH..
SO WHAT DID YOU WANT ME FOR?
I NEED TO ASK SOME-THING OF YOU
..AS MICHELOTTO.

GRAB
YOU'RE A LATE BLOOMER.
SO EASY TO TEASE.
CHIA-RO...
WHAT DOES HE MEAN?
...JUST CAN'T LEAVE THOSE TEAR-FILLED EYES ALONE, RIGHT?
FINE...
SO I SHOULD TAKE WHAT YOU DID THAT TIME AS A JOKE TOO?

GIOVANNI'S NONSENSICAL RUMORS HAVE BEEN SPREADING LIKE WILDFIRE
AND NOT JUST HERE IN ROME THERE'S A GROUP OF PEOPLE WORKING THEIR HARDEST TO SPREAD THE RUMORS INTO OTHER COUNTRIES AS WELL.
WE THINK THEY MIGHT BE SPIES WORKING FOR THE ORSINIS AND COLONNAS.
OH, I SEE. SO THAT'S WHAT HE NEEDS MICHELOTTO FOR.
WE WANT YOU TO TRACK THEM DOWN AND KILL THEM AS A WARNING TO GIOVANNI.
I THINK I KNOW THE GUYS YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT.
SOME VERY SHADY CHARACTERS HAVE BEEN PROWLING AROUND THE AREA LATELY.
THE WAY GIOVANNI SAYS WHATEVER HE LIKES...
..ABOUT THAT FAIREST OF MAIDENS
...MAKES ME WANT TO STRIKE DOWN THAT SCUM RIGHT NOW
PERSONALLY SPEAKING.
IT'S RARE TO HEAR YOU SAY SUCH THINGS.
I HADN'T REALIZED YOU LOVED LUCREZIA THAT MUCH.
YOU!
WHAT'RE YOU... YOU'VE GOT IT ALL WRONG!
I JUST--!

SHUT
DON'T GET..OVER-ZEALOUS AND GO AFTER GIOVANN YOUR-SELF
WELL THEN.
I'M GOING.
OH WELL... IF HE FORGOT, SO BE IT.
I GOT IT, I GOT IT
You don have to remind me!
FOOL.
WHAT DOES HE WANT ME TO SAY?

IN THE DARK OF THE NIGHT...
A KISS.
YOU... PLANTED ONE ON ME...
THAT TIME...?
NEVER MIND..
I NEVER KNEW HE WAS THAT HEAVY A DRINKER
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?

FLAP
LET'S GET OUT OF THIS PLACE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.
!
EVEN WITH THE WAR OVER, THIS TOWN IS STILL IN DISARRAY.
IT'S ANOTHER DEAD BODY.
HOW HORRID!
RRRI
CRACK
EE!

YOU'RE THE ONLY ONE...
...WHO CONFUSES ME LIKE THIS.
CAAAW
CAAAW
FLAP

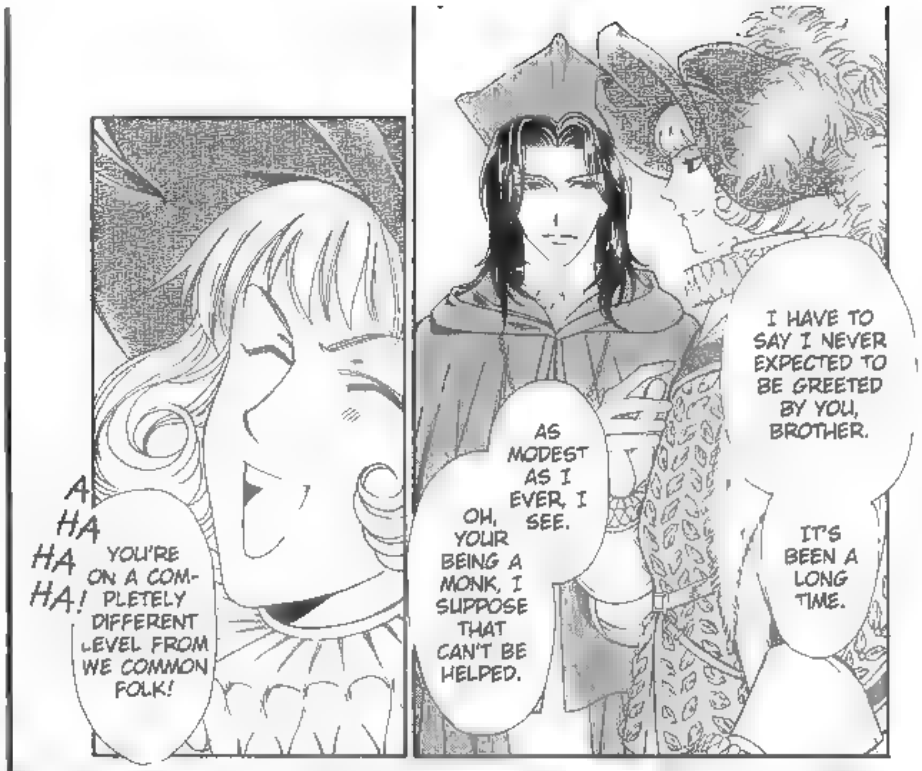
CLANG
CHARGE
DIE!
YOU!
DASH
AS I THOUGHT. THESE ARE ORSINI'S GOONS ALL RIGHT. THEIR DECENT SWORDSMANSHIP PROVES IT.
BUT...
THEIR STANCE IS WAY OFF..

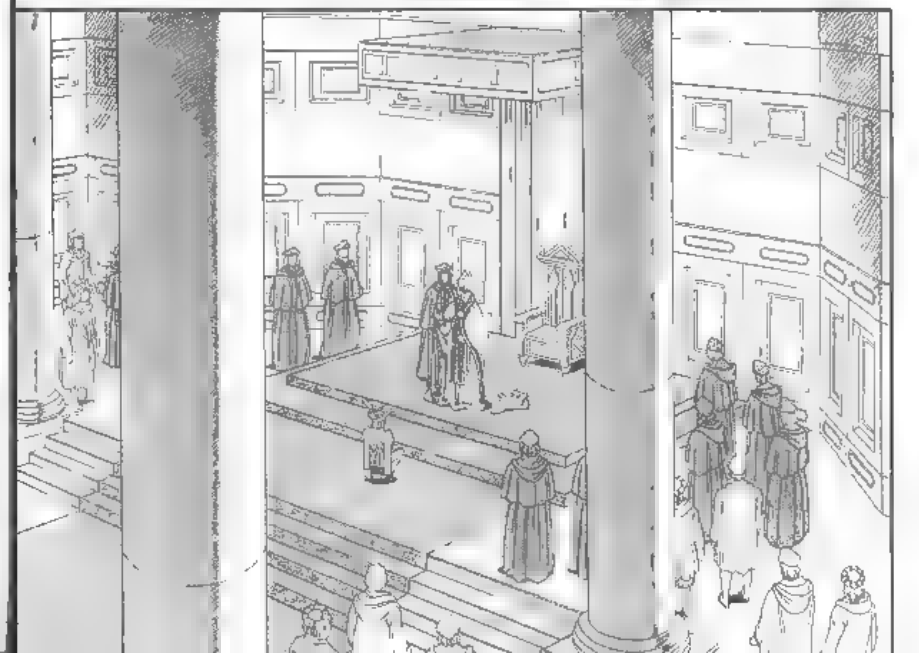
IT WAS..
IT WAS A DEMON! THERE'S NO MISTAKING IT!
I SWEAR!
I WAS UTTERLY TERRIFIED!
SO WHAT HAPPENED?
THE CREATURE SCREAMED AT US AND THEN FLEW PAST.
IT DISAPPEARED BEHIND THE HILL OF PONTEVECCHIO!
SOMETHING TELLS ME ALL IS NOT WELL...
TO VANOZZA CATANEI'S MANSION, EH?

THE PATH OF SUFFERING WILL CONTINUE
THE POWER OF LOCAL FAMILIES IS STILL VERY STRONG--STRONG ENOUGH TO CHALLENGE THE POPE'S STABILITY.
FIGHTING WILL BE AN INEVITABILITY
HOW SCARY.
SO IT'S YOU AGAIN.
I ALMOST CUT YOU DOWN WITHOUT THINKING.
I GUESS.
THE VATICAN'S TOO CONFINED FOR HIM.
HE'S OBSESSED
...WITH FLAPPING HIS WINGS TO REACH THE BIG SKY.
NO DOUBT THIS IS SOMETHING TO FRET ABOUT.
FOR YOUR TYRANT RESTRICTED BY HIS SCARLET ROBES, I MEAN.

DOING SO MUCH FOR YOUR MASTER...
CONTINUALLY DIRTYING YOUR HANDS FOR HIM. I'D SAY YOU TRULY ARE GALLANT, MY LITTLE CHIARO.
PURIFYING RAIN. WHEN ENOUGH WATER TO WASH AWAY THESE BLOOD STAINS FINALLY FALLS...
...WE WILL NEED NOAH'S ARK.
SLUMP
RAIN... AT TIMES LIKE THIS.
TIMES WHEN I KILL PEOPLE... IT ALWAYS RAINS.

WHEN I LEARNED THAT THE FORM THE DEMON TOOK WAS OF HIS BELOVED VANOZZA...
OH WELL. WILL THE DEMONS WIN?
OR YOU?
I'LL BE WATCHING EAGERLY FROM THE SIDELINES.
... I COULDN'T HELP WONDERING IF YOU COULD REALLY PROTECT HIM. HIS SOUL FROM THAT...
I'M SORRY! I'M SORRY!
Aww! the same pattern
SWIPE
HIS BLACK WINGS, PERHAPS?
AS LONG AS HE HAS ME, HE WON'T BECOME A DEMON.
I'LL MAKE SURE OF IT.
AND IF IT MEANT SOME SORT OF ATONEMENT FOR HIM...
I'D GLADLY BECOME HIS AZAZEL GOAT.*
AZAZEL GOAT, EH?
IT SURPRISES ME HOW DEEP YOUR KNOWLEDGE OF A HERETICAL GOD GOES
*Biblical reference to a ceremony where one goat is sacrificed as atonement while a second goat (Azazel) is forced to wander in a wilderness for its sins.
CHANG
CHANG
STOP THAT!
MURMUR
WHAT THE... THAT'S... SOMETHING ELSE!
WEE! IT'S A CLOWN!
A CLOWN

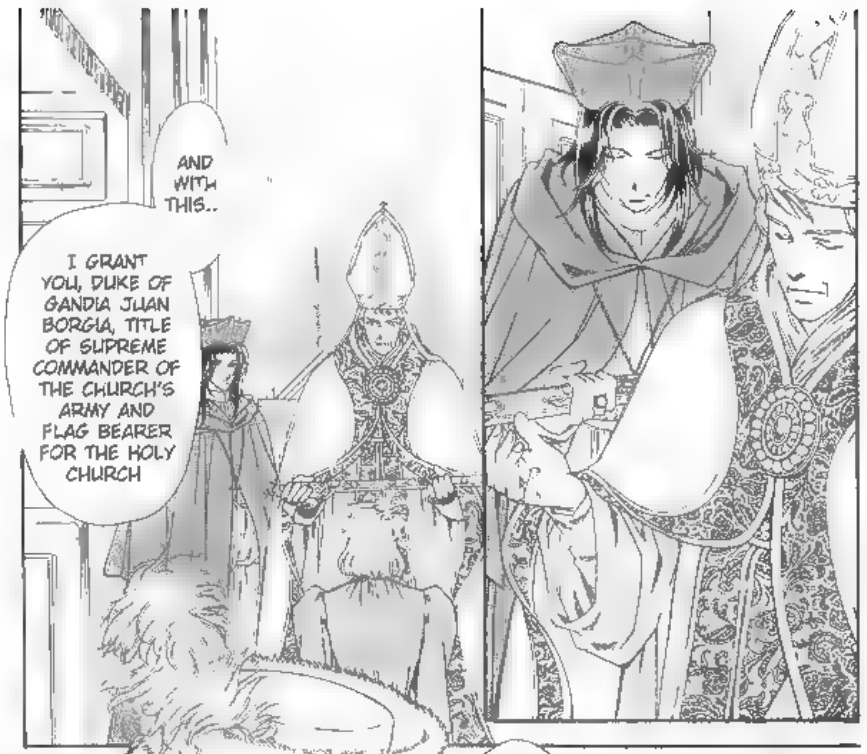

I HAVE TO SAY I NEVER EXPECTED TO BE GREETED BY YOU, BROTHER.
IT'S BEEN A LONG TIME.
AS MODEST AS I EVER, I SEE.
OH, YOUR BEING A MONK, I SUPPOSE THAT CAN'T BE HELPED.
A HA HA HA!
YOU'RE ON A COMPLETELY DIFFERENT LEVEL FROM WE COMMON FOLK!



OH STOP, YOU
YOU NEEDN'T USE SUCH FORMAL TITLES WITH ME, DEAR BROTHER. JUAN SHOULD DO.
I HAVE COME HERE TO ESCORT YOU AS THE POPE'S SPECIAL ENVOY.
DUKE OF GANDIA, SIGNORE JUAN BORGIA
hoo!

I hear he spends all his time with women and gamblers.
Has that nobleman's son ever even led an army before?
AHEM
I'M COUNTING ON IT.
I'M SURE THAT I WILL FULFILL YOUR HOLINESS' EXPECTATIONS.

THE ONE WHO PREACHED OF THEIR NECESSITY TO THE POPE FOR THE SAKE OF UNIFYING ITALY...WAS CESARE.
THE REMOVAL OF LOCAL RULING FAMILIES.
AND THEN THE STRENGTHENING OF THE CHURCH'S ARMY.


AND WITH THIS..
I GRANT YOU, DUKE OF GANDIA JUAN BORGIA, TITLE OF SUPREME COMMANDER OF THE CHURCH'S ARMY AND FLAG BEARER FOR THE HOLY CHURCH

I HUMBLY ACCEPT MY POST.

I HEARD THAT VIRGINIO WAS LOST IN THE WAR AGAINST ATTILA.
WHERE WILL THEY GO AFTER THIS BATTLE?
THE ORSINI FAMILY NO LONGER HAS ITS COMMANDER VIRGINIO.
WITHOUT A COMMANDER, IT WILL BE WORTH SEEING JUST HOW LONG THE ORSINI ARMY'S POWER CAN LAST.
!?
IF THEY SURVIVE
...TO NAPLES.
HE FORESAW SUCH A THING SO FAR AHEAD?
WHY ELSE DO YOU THINK. .
...I SENT VOLPE SO FAR AWAY?
!?

I'LL WIN US AN HONORABLE VICTORY.
FOR YOU, MY BROTHER, AS WELL.
DIFFICULT FOR ONE SO FULL OF PRIDE LIKE HIMSELF...
WHAT KINDS OF EMOTIONS ARE RUNNING THROUGH HIM BENEATH THAT EXPRESSIONLESS FACE?
HE CAN DO NOTHING BUT SEND OUT THE ORDERS AND WAIT PATIENTLY BEHIND THE PAPAL THRONE.
IS IT REALLY OKAY TO LET HIM BE SO COCKY?
HE'S IN HIGH SPIRITS.
IT'S ALL ACCORDING TO PLAN.
WITH MASTER JUAN COMMANDING US, THE VICTORY IS AS GOOD AS OURS!
A HA HA HA!
YOU CAN SAY THAT AGAIN!

COME, CHARO.
I WAS HOPING YOU'D LEND YOURSELF AS MY SPARRING PARTNER.
I HEARD YOU WERE GIVING THE MERCENARIES A LESSON EARLIER.
YOU WOULDN'T NEED A LESSON FROM ME. YOU'RE STRONG ENOUGH ALREADY.
ONE FALSE MOVE AND I'D LOSE TO YOU
THEN LET'S HAVE A MATCH.
OR ARE YOU TOO CHICKEN ?
DON'T PROVOKE ME.
CLANG
CLANG
WOW !
A.. AMAZING!
THAT STRENGTH
IT'S NOT HUMAN !

FOR NOW...
..WE JUST SIT BACK AND LET MY LITTLE BROTHER SHOW US WHAT HE'S GOT
WE CAN SAVE THE WORRYING FOR LATER.
MY FATHER'S A BIT WORRIED, SO HE ASSIGNED THE FAMOUS GENERAL PRINCE GUIDOBALD AS SECOND IN COMMAND.
BUT WHEN JUAN FAILS, HE WILL BE REALIZED FOR THE TRUE INCOMPETENT HE IS.

Slow-ly...
...but surely, history has begun fomenting.
Hiding dark, ominous clouds...
WOW...A FLOCK OF BIRDS!? THOSE ARE BIRDS... RIGHT?
A BLACK FEA-THER.
WHY IS IT THAT I HAVE THIS TERRIBLE FEELING?

LOOK!
IT'S SIGNORE CESARE AND SIGNORE MICHELOTTO! ♡
OH! LADY SAN-CIA!
YOU THERE. OUT OF THE WAY.
WHAT IS IT? LEMME SEE!
WOW! ♡
But that masked man is a close second
THE MORE I LOOK AT HIM, THE MORE SPLENDID HE IS TO ME...
FLUTTER

ROAR
ROAR
RUMBLE
RUMBLE
SLICE

RUMBLE

FANCY RUNNING INTO YOU IN A PLACE LIKE THIS.
IT'S CARDINAL ROVERE!
!
WELL IF IT ISN'T SIGNORE CESARE.
!
NOT GOOD... I CAN'T BELIEVE I LET MYSELF GET TOO CLOSE..
I'D HEARD HE HAD TAKEN THE ORSINI'S SIDE BUT
BUMP
WHOA
WASN'T IT A LITTLE BOLD OF YOU TO BE OBSERVING THE ENEMY'S MOVEMENTS?
HO HO

SWING
!
WITH THE FRENCH KING GONE, THE ORSINIS, CALLED THE BONE STUCK IN THE VATICAN'S THROAT...
...HAVE THEIR EYES ON THOSE HATEFUL BORGIAS.
CATCH HIM!
WE NEED HIM ALIVE AS A HOSTAGE!
WE CAN'T LET THIS OPPORTUNITY ESCAPE US!
SHOW THEM WHAT THEY GET FOR MOCKING ME!
NO MATTER WHAT WE CAN'T LET HIM GET AWAY!

CESARE.
WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN?
THE MOMENT EVERYONE REALIZED YOU WERE GONE, THEY WENT INTO AN UPROAR.
YOU WERE LOOKING FOR ME, CHIARO?
I KNOW HOW YOU LIKE TO HAVE TIME TO YOURSELF EVERY SO OFTEN.
ANYWAY, IT LOOKS LIKE THE INITIAL PANIC'S ALREADY CALMED DOWN.

I COULD ALMOST LAUGH.
WHAT WAS I GETTING SO WORKED UP OVER?

I JUST SAW FOR MYSELF HOW...
...WHEN THE ONE COMMANDING THE MEN DOES NOT COME ONTO THE FIELD ..
...THE BATTLE CAN GO VERY WRONG

YOUR HOL-NESS!
WE HAVE AN URGENT REPORT FROM THE BATTLE-FIELD!

ENOUGH! GIVE ME A SWORD!
I'M GOING TO THE BATTLE-FIELD!
I can't take it any longer
YOUR HOLINESS! WHERE ARE YOU GOING?

SO BRACCIALI CASTLE STILL HASN'T FALLEN?
WHAT'S TAKING JUAN SO LONG!?
WITH THE CHURCH'S SUPERIOR MILITARY STRENGTH, SUPPRESSING THE ORSINIS WAS SUPPOSED TO BE AN EASY VICTORY!

SO THAT'S WHAT THIS IS ALL ABOUT. YOU WENT TO WATCH THE BATTLE
I'M NOT SUR-PRISED.
?
CLICK
JUST A LITTLE PAST THOSE HILLS ...
...YOU CAN LOOK OUT OVER THE BATTLE-FIELD ONTO BOTH CAMPS.

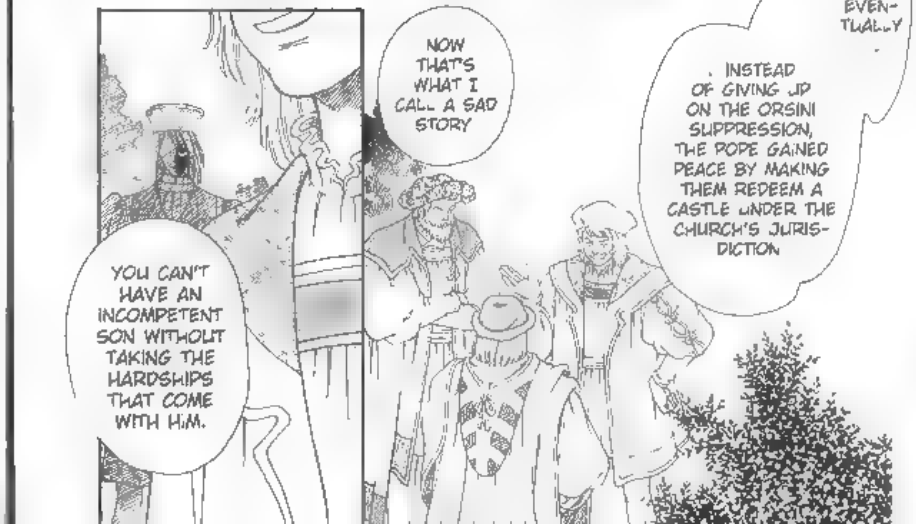
NOT EXACTLY AS I'D EXPECTED.
WELL? HOW'D IT GO?

OH ..
YOUR CLOTHES.
IF LUCREZIA CATCHES YOU IN THAT, SHE'LL FAINT. YOU'D BETTER GET CHANGED

-KEEE!
HURRY! GET AWAY FROM HERE!
THUNK
!
BUT DUKE OF GANDIA, WE NEED YOUR ORDERS-
SHUT UP! SHUT UP!!
I'VE SUFFERED SERIOUS INJURY! HOW CAN YOU EXPECT ME TO GIVE ORDERS IN MY STATE?
RE-TREAT!
RETREEEAT!

IN THE MIDST OF THE CHAOS, THE SECOND IN COMMAND, LORD GUIDOBALD, WAS APPREHENDED AND THE DUKE OF GANDIA...
WHEN THE CHURCH'S ARMY REACHED SORIANO TERRITORY, A BATTLE BROKE OUT.
WELL ..
OH! HAVE THEY FINALLY FALLEN?
WELL ...
THE DUKE OF GANDIA WAS.
JUAN! DID SOMETHING HAPPEN TO JUAN!?
-KEE
-KEEEE!
PREPARE YOURSELF, DUKE OF GANDIA!

I'M HOME.
JUAN!
HOW'S JUAN!?
HOLY FATHER!
THE ORSINI ARMY HAS ADVANCED AS FAR AS ROME'S RAMPARTS!
STEP
4


YOU CAN'T HAVE AN INCOMPETENT SON WITHOUT TAKING THE HARDSHIPS THAT COME WITH HIM.
NOW THAT'S WHAT I CALL A SAD STORY
EVENTUALLY, INSTEAD OF GIVING UP ON THE ORSINI SUPPRESSION, THE POPE GAINED PEACE BY MAKING THEM REDEEM A CASTLE UNDER THE CHURCH'S JURISDICTION

SOMEBODY!
YOUR HOLINESS!
THE POPE HAS FAINTED!
WAKE UP!
HOLY FATHER!
Faint
INK
INK
.....

MARCH
MARCH

MASTER CESARE.
GOLDEN EYES!?
OH.
MONSIEUR DELLA VOLPE!
HA HA HA!
TELL ME ABOUT IT!
!?
IS MASTER CESARE HERE?
Y--YES, COME IN.
I'VE BEEN TOLD THAT YOU MAY COME IN ANY TIME YOU LIKE, MASTER VOLPE.

I--I DON'T KNOW ...
WHEN I CAME TO, IT WAS LIKE THIS...
JUST LIKE THAT TIME ..
THAT TIME!...
I WAS CONSUMED BY ANGER...
YES...AND WHEN I CAME TO...
OH ...
WHAT HAPPENED HERE?
AM I IMAG-INING THINGS?!
!?
TAGIO, YOU'RE BACK.
MASTER CESARE !
DID SOME-THING HAPPEN TO YOU?

FLUTTER
MASTER CESARE !?
!
AAH!
!?

NO ...
JUST LEAVE ME BE.
DON'T WORRY ABOUT ME
I'LL HAVE THE CHAMBERLAIN PREPARE YOUR BED.
YOU SHOULD GET SOME REST
I--I WASN'T MYSELF!

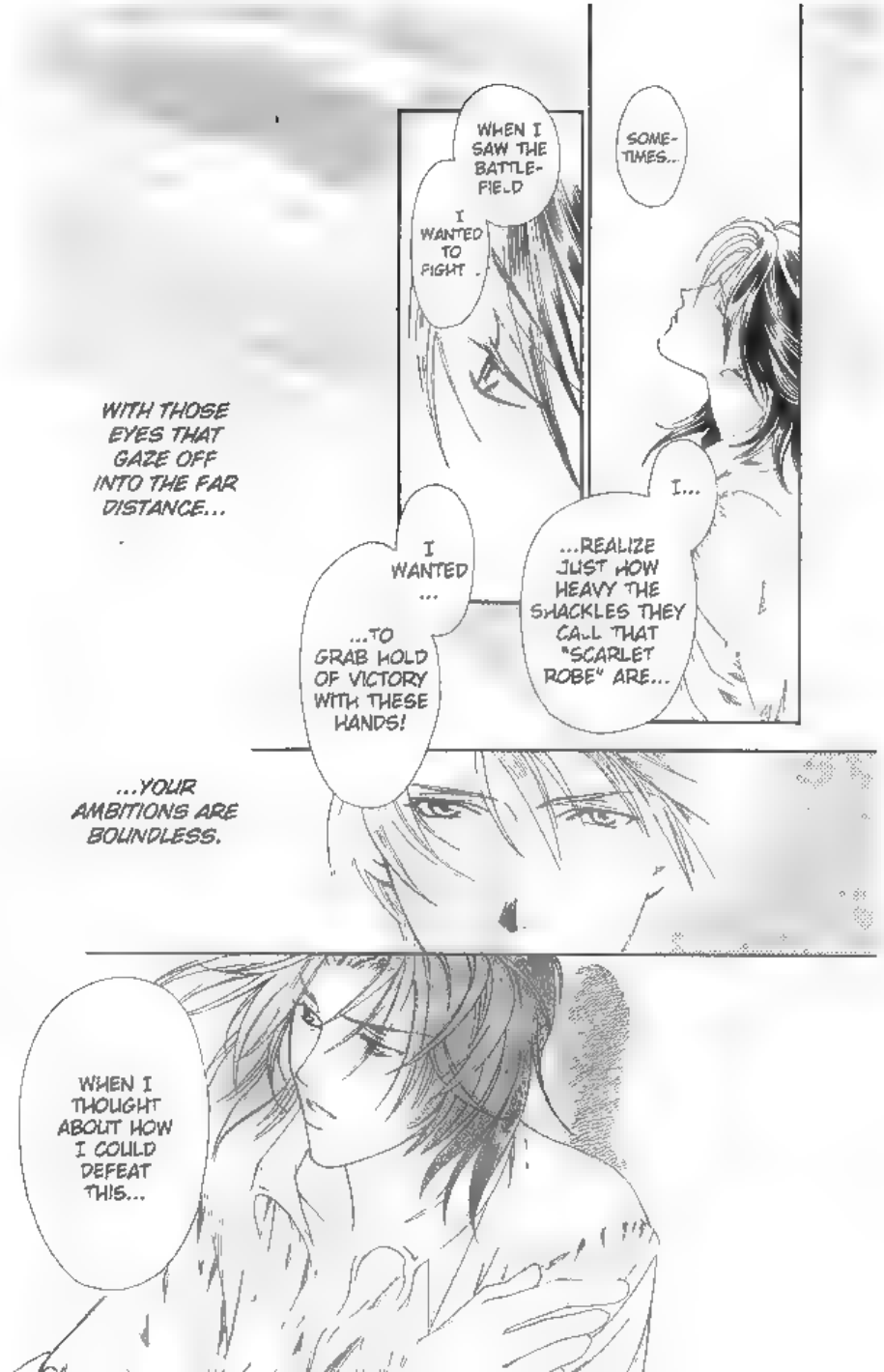
CHI ...
ARO ...
TREMBLE TREMBLE
JUST AS I THOUGHT. SO THIS IS WHAT HAPPENED.
CALM DOWN. THIS ISN'T LIKE YOU.

MASTER CESARE !?
CE-SARE
YOU CALLED ME?
FLASH

HERE, DRINK THIS.
IT'LL WARM YOU UP
SNAP
CRACKLE
DON'T GET TOO CLOSE TO HIM...
THANK YOU
COUGH COUGH HACK
HOW RUDE! AND AFTER I MADE THAT ESPECIALLY FOR YOU!
Blegh...
A FIT... OF SORTS.
YOU NEEDN'T WORRY.
WHAT'S HAPPENED TO MASTER CESARE?
I'M SORRY.
WOULD YOU LEAVE US ALONE FOR A MINUTE?

I SEE. . WELL...
IT WAS UNCON-SCIOUS
I'M SORRY
HEH .
I'M REALLY PATHETIC. WHEN I GET LIKE THAT, I LOSE ALL CONTROL.
SO THE ONSET REALLY WAS...
MY OWN INVENTION. A SPECIAL HERB TEA.
IT'S GOOD FOR YOU.
The secret ingredient is NEWT
I'LL HAVE IT LATER.
JERK.
WHAT ...
..DID YOU PUT IN HERE?
YOUR VOICE ECHOED N MY HEAD.
YOU CALLED ME, DIDN'T YOU?
!
NO, I DIDN'T!
HOW...
...DID YOU KNOW ...
...I WAS IN TROUBLE?

THANK YOU, CHIARO.
...IT FELT AS THOUGH MY HEART WAS BEING PULLED INTO THE "DARKNESS".
I'M GLAD I HAVE YOU.
THEN
WHAT CONCLUSION HAS THIS BROUGHT YOU TO?


WHEN I SAW THE BATTLE-FIELD
I WANTED TO FIGHT.
SOME-TIMES..
I...
...REALIZE JUST HOW HEAVY THE SHACKLES THEY CALL THAT "SCARLET ROBE" ARE...
I WANTED ...
...TO GRAB HOLD OF VICTORY WITH THESE HANDS!
WHEN I THOUGHT ABOUT HOW I COULD DEFEAT THIS...

WITH THOSE EYES THAT GAZE OFF INTO THE FAR DISTANCE...

...YOUR AMBITIONS ARE BOUNDLESS.

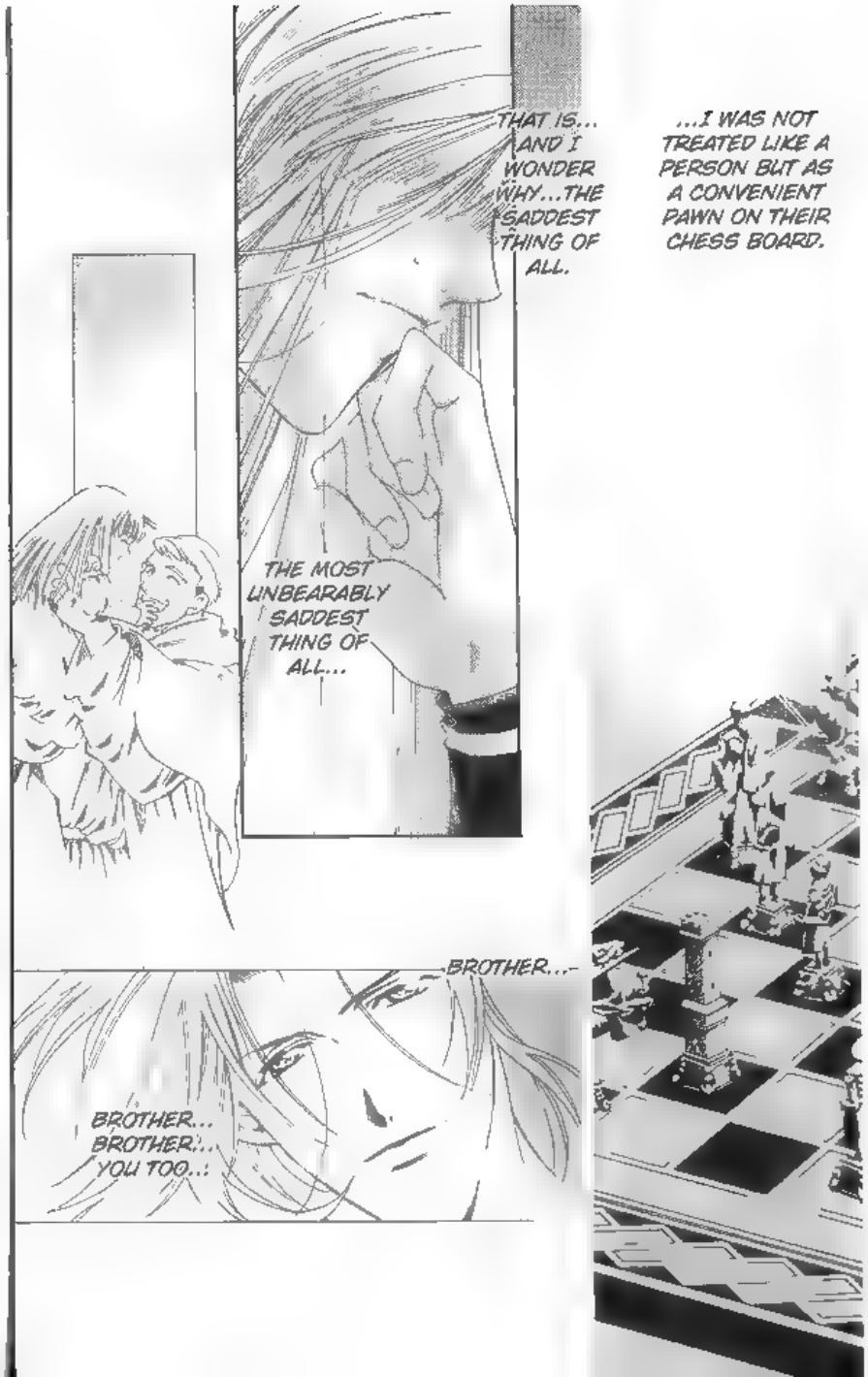
A FEW DAYS AGO, SECRET MESSENGERS OF THE COLONNAS..
WERE FOUND MURDERED
HE'S GOING TO SEE THAT I DIE!
PLEASE RETURN TO PESARO, MASTER GIOVANNI!
YOU'RE IN DANGER HERE.
HE'S GOING TO KILL ME!
CLIP CLOP
CLIP CLOP
La morte imitava il tuo viso
THEY WERE AMONGST THE ONES SPREADING THE SLANDER AGAINST LADY LUCREZIA...
..THEY'RE SAYING THAT YOU, MASTER GIOVANNI, ARE BEHIND IT ALL.
...AND NOW THAT THE CASE IS BEING LOOKED INTO...
.SENDING US TO MEET BEHIND CLOSED DOORS LIKE THIS.
CARDINAL ASCANIO SFORZA IS ALSO ENRAGED ...
YOU ARE A MEMBER OF THE SFORZA HOUSEHOLD.
I DON'T KNOW.
I WOULDN'T KNOW!

THAT IS ALL
. WILL FOLLOW MY CONVICTION.
YOU'RE MISTAKEN!
I... I'M NOT THE LORD OF PESARO!
LORD OF PESARO!
YOU'RE UP EARLY
WHAT'S THIS?
Tip toe

ONLY THEY COULD PULL OFF SOMETHING LIKE THIS.
ONLY THEY...
MY DEAR, DON'T WORRY YOUR LITTLE HEAD ABOUT IT
I AM ALREADY SEARCHING FOR AN EVEN MORE SUITABLE SPOUSE FOR YOU.
WHY THIS ALL OF A SUDDEN--!
DIVORCE?
YOU'RE SAYING YOU WANT ME TO DIVORCE THE LORD OF PESARO?

SO...
...THE POPE SAYS HE WANTS ME DEAD?
ME? HIS OWN SON-IN-LAW?
YOU CANNOT ESCAPE THE BORGIAS' POISONOUS FANGS!
AND THE POPE PROBABLY THINKS IT WILL BE PROFITABLE TO HIM TO BE AFFILIATED WITH NAPLES, WHICH HAS TIES TO SPAIN.
AFTER THEIR LAST KING PASSED AWAY, PROBLEMS SURROUNDING THE ISSUE OF WHO WOULD INHERIT THE THRONE PUT NAPLES IN GREAT NEED OF THE POPE'S POWER.

AND SO, MASTER GIOVANNI
YOU ARE NOW SEEN AS NOTHING BUT AN OBSTACLE DUE TO YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH THE ANTAGONISTIC MILAN.


THAT IS... AND I WONDER WHY...THE SADDEST THING OF ALL.
...I WAS NOT TREATED LIKE A PERSON BUT AS A CONVENIENT PAWN ON THEIR CHESS BOARD.
THE MOST UNBEARABLY SADDEST THING OF ALL...
BROTHER...
BROTHER... BROTHER... YOU TOO...!

A MAN...
...WHO MATCHES YOU IN PEDIGREE.
WHAT'S THE MATTER, LUCREZIA?
AH!
LUCREZIA...
IT'S NOT THAT I'M SAD ABOUT HAVING TO END MY MARRIAGE TO THE LORD OF PESARO.
I NEVER HAD FEELINGS OF AFFECTION FOR THAT BRUTE ANYWAY.
FROM THE VERY START IT WAS AN ARRANGED UNION...
...SO WE NEVER SHARED THE VOWS USUALLY FOUND BETWEEN HUSBANDS AND WIVES.
FROM THE VERY START ...

SO PROUD ...
SO BRAVE ...
SO BEAUTIFUL...
YOU WHO CHALLENGE GOD HIMSELF...
YOU, TOO.

!
DID YOU...
.LOVE THAT MAN GIOVANNI SO MUCH THAT NOW YOU CRY FOR H.M?
NO .. I HAVE ALREADY FOR-GOTTEN ABOUT THAT MAN.
I AM A DAUGHTER OF THE BORGIA HOUSE-HOLD.
IF IT'S FOR YOU, I WILL SUFFER ANYTHING, CESARE

I'M PROUD THAT YOU ARE MY BROTH-ER...
...AND AT THE SAME TIME SAD.. THAT YOU ARE MY BROTHER.
LUCREZIA.
HOW DID YOU ...

I'VE TRIED TO KILL THESE FEELINGS COUNTLESS TIMES.
BUT I CAN'T.
AS LONG AS I AM LUCREZIA...
...I WILL CONTINUE FEELING THIS WAY ABOUT YOU.
UNTIL I DIE, I WILL FEEL THIS WAY!
IF YOU TELL ME TO MARRY, THEN I WILL MARRY.
I DON'T CARE HOW MANY MEN I MUST GIVE UP THIS BODY TO.
IF..
..ONLY BUT ONCE..

I...
...LOVE YOU!

I CARE ABOUT YOU...
PLEASE UNDERSTAND THAT, LUCREZIA

!?
SHIFT

I LOVE YOU...
...AS A SISTER.
.....
FLUTTER
NO...
NO, I CAN'T LET YOU GO.
TOUCH
.....!

WOOOOOO
I GUESS IT FEELS AS THOUGH ...
...I'VE LOST SOMETHING VERY PRECIOUS TO ME...
WHAT'S THE MATTER? YOU LOOK DAZED.
OH?

I.
LOVE...
...YOU.
I LOVE YOU.
AS A SISTER.
WOOOOOO
I...
...LOVE YOU...

...CANNOT... REACH THEM...
MY HAND...
SO FAR AWAY THAT MY HAND CANNOT REACH THEM EVER AGAIN.
I DON'T WANT THAT TO HAP-PEN.
NO!

HOW SHOULD I HAVE DEALT WITH THESE OVERWHELMING FEELINGS WITHIN ME?
...ARE FADING INTO THE FAR DISTANCE.
THOSE KIND MOMENTS SHARED BENEATH THE SUNLIT-FILTERED TREES...
THESE FEELINGS THAT ARE SO INTENSE THAT I CAN-NOT EVEN CONTROL THEM...

SHUT UP! I DON'T WANT TO HEAR YOUR COMPLAINTS. JUST DO AS I TOLD YOU!
MASTER, ARE YOU SURE YOU SHOULD BE DOING THIS?
WHAT IF THE POPE UNLEASHES HIS WRATH ON YOU?
CLATTER
CLATTER
A HUSBAND CAN DO ANYTHING HE LIKES WITH HIS WIFE
EVEN WITH THE LITTLE TIME LEFT AS LUCREZIA'S HUSBAND ..
...I WILL DO AS I PLEASE.
I WILL SHOW THOSE DISRESPECTFUL BORGIAS HER TEARFUL FACE.
I'LL HAVE LUCREZIA.
AH!
IT'S YOU!!
NO! LET ME GO!
LUCREZIA.
BROTHER!?
NOOO!
CLATTER
CLATTER

UH..
NN...

GI... GIOVANNI! WHERE AM I?
YOU'RE AWAKE, LUCREZIA.
!

NOW LET'S UNLOAD HER
THERE'S NO ONE HERE.

I TOLD YOU TO BE QUIET.
IT'S TOO LATE TO BACK OUT NOW.
PERHAPS YOU SHOULD RECONSIDER WHAT YOU'RE DOING?

DO YOU KNOW WHAT THE POPE'S "REASON" IS FOR REJECTING ME AS YOUR SPOUSE?
HE SAID IT'S BECAUSE I'M "SEXUALLY IMPOTENT"!
DOESN'T THAT MAKE YOU WANT TO LAUGH?
ONE SMALL MOVE AND YOU'LL GET A BAD CUT.
ALL THIS TIME, I'VE FOLLOWED THE POPE'S ORDERS AND NOT LAID A HAND ON YOU.
SO IT WAS ALL FOR THIS MOMENT.
I'M GOING TO USE YOUR BODY...
...AS PROOF OF MY SEXUAL POTENCY, LUCREZIA!
I TOLD YOU NOT TO MOVE!
YOU BITCH!
N--NO, SOMEBODY--!
NO!!
SO I CAN TAKE ANY FORM OF REVENGE I DESIRE!
ANYWAY, I'M NO LONGER AFFILIATED WITH HIM!
SLAP

YOU CAN'T MOVE YOUR BODY VERY WELL, CAN YOU?
YOU SEE, I COULDN'T HAVE YOU MAKING A FUSS.
DON'T COME NEAR ME!
YOU'LL BE FINE THOUGH.
THE EFFECTS OF THE DRUG WILL WEAR OFF AFTER I'M DONE WITH YOU.
AH... AH!
WOBBLE
WHY DO YOU THINK I RISKED MY LIFE...
...TO STEAL YOU AWAY HERE?
I'M JUST GOING TO SEE FOR MYSELF IF YOU REALLY ARE A VIRGIN.
DON'T WORRY
I'M NOT GOING TO KILL YOU

I WAS TOLD NOT TO TAKE MY EYES OFF OF YOU.
WHOA
GRAB
WERE YOU FOLLOW-ING ME?
Y...YOU SNEAK!
YOU'RE FROM CESARE'S PLACE!
I'D LIKE TO AVOID MAKING THE SITUA-TION ANY WORSE
SO JUST GET OUT OF HERE RIGHT NOW
BROTHER...
NOW THEN ...
SLIP
THUNK
YOU SHAMEFUL PIG.
TAKING THE POOR GIRL TO BED BY FORCE.
GRAB

DOES THIS MEAN CESARE HAS TAKEN THIS LEGEND-ARY ASSASSIN UNDER HIS WING?
WAIT, MASTER!
AND THAT MY LIFE IS NOW IN THE PALM OF HIS HAND?
CESARE BORGIA... HE'S...UNLIKE ANY OTHER MAN!
THERE'S NO MIS-TAKING IT
THIS MAN FAMED FOR HIS BLOODLUST IS NO ORDINARY BEING!
WHO ARE YOU!?
PLCP
IF YOU DON'T...
..THIS PLACE WILL BE YOUR GRAVE
A MASKED MAN...THAT'S RIGHT...HIS NAME IS...
MICHELOTTO...
THE ASSASSIN MICHELOTTO!

WHOOP-SIE
Was I too late?
I'M NOT GOING TO HURT YOU SO YOU NEEDN'T WORRY
YOU...
He's fast on his feet
HUH
NN
OOPS.
DANG.
Talk about temptation
RUSTLE

YOU TOO ...
...LEFT A DEEP IMPRESSION ON ME, M'LADY.
YOU LEFT A VERY DEEP IMPRESSION ON ME.
HOW COULD I FORGET ?
YOU MUST HAVE A GOOD MEMORY.
TO REMEMBER SOMETHING LIKE THAT
WHEN SHE LOOKS DOWN, SHE ALMOST... RESEMBLES CESARE... HER FACE AT LEAST...
I WISH I COULD TOUCH... HER SOFT FACE...
THUMP
CHIARO?
WH ...
Y-YES?
YOU'VE RESCUED ME...
...ONCE AGAIN.
WHAT HAPPENED TO GIOVANNI ?
HE LEFT.
!?
CHIARO...
IT IS CHIARO, ISN'T IT?

I WISH . .
I CAN'T GO BACK TO WHERE MY BROTHER IS.
PLEASE, CHIARO! I DON'T WANT TO GO BACK.
I DON'T WANT TO GO BACK!
...I COULD JUST DIS-APPEAR HERE AND NOW!
THERE'S NO PLACE LEFT FOR ME TO GO.
M'LADY ...

PLEASE
...TAKE ME AWAY WITH YOU!
!?

DON'T GO MAKING ME OUT TO BE A BAD GUY ALREADY!
STOP TALKING NONSENSE! I'M BRINGING YOU BACK!
NO!
IF YOU ARE, THEN THIS IS THE PERFECT OPPORTU-NITY FOR YOU.
YOU NEEDN'T HESITATE TO TAKE ME!
WH...
WHAT ARE YOU SAYING?
I COULD BE A DANGER-OUS GUY!
YOU DON'T EVEN KNOW WHO I AM!

AH!
IF A MAIDEN LIKE YOU WHO DOESN'T KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT THE WORLD...
...SAYS SOMETHING LIKE THAT, WHY NOT KIDNAP YOU? BUT DON'T BLAME ME FOR WHAT HAPPENS TO YOU.
!
I'M KID-DING. SILLY GIRL.
HMPH
SHE LOOKS SO FRIGHTENED...
CH ...
...ARO !?
DO YOU REALLY MEAN ... WHAT YOU'RE SAYING ?

I MUST LEAVE. THAT IS THE BEST THING I CAN DO NOW.
M'LADY

YOU REALLY SHOULD RETURN.
I'LL TAKE YOU HOME.
CH ARO.
WAIT.
!?
NOT THERE.

NOT UNTIL I CAN PUT AN END TO THESE FEELINGS I HAVE FOR HIM...
I HAVE DECIDED.
I'D LIKE YOU TO BRING ME TO THE SISTINE DOMINIC MONASTERY.
I WISH TO SPEND SOME TIME...
.ALONE IN SOLI-TUDE THERE.
I CAN'T BRING MYSELF TO SEE MY BROTHER AGAIN.

..I HEARD THIS WAR WAS IN A PITIFUL STATE.
BEFORE GONZALO DE CORDOBA JOINED IN..
YEAH, THAT DIMWIT OF A SON'S COMMANDING PROWESS.
. AND FIGHTING SPIRIT ARE LACKING CONSIDERABLY.
YOU CAN SAY THAT AGAIN!
SNICKER
CHEER
CHEER
CHEER
GONZALO DE CORDOBA, RIGHT?
AH, YES. THE POPE CALLED HIM OUT HERE
...WAS THE SPANIARD NEXT TO HIM!
THOUGH THE ONE WHO PULLED OFF CAPTURING OSTIA
TAKE A LOOK. HE'S SOUR ABOUT LOSING HIS SHARE OF THE GLORY.
LOOK AT HIM.
THE DUKE OF GANDIA HAS SUCH A TRIUMPHANT LOOK ON HIS FACE.
It was nothing really!

CHAPTER 14
BUT...
IT'S STILL TOO SOON TO FETCH HER BACK.
SHE'S AT THE SISTINE MONASTERY
CESARE!
MOVE!
I'M GOING TO GET HER.
BUT...
GIVE HER A LITTLE MORE TIME.
THERE'S SOMETHING... SHE WANTS TO BREAK AWAY FROM.
YOU THINK YOU ...KNOW SO MUCH

CHIARO
I WILL
I CAN'T VERY WELL NEGLECT MY DUTIES.
They'd brighten your mood.
YOU WON'T BE ATTENDING THE VICTORY CELEBRATIONS?
YOU KNOW, DON'T YOU?
WHERE'S LUCREZIA?
NOBODY'S SEEN HER SINCE LAST NIGHT. THE HOUSE IS IN A PANIC.
!?

WHY ARE YOU ASKING ME THAT ALL OF A SUDDEN?
YOU'RE WEIRD, YOU KNOW THAT CESARE?
!
ANSWER ME, CHIARO!

SLAM
I DON'T KNOW!
ANYWAY, SHE'D NEVER LOOK TWICE MY WAY!
AND AS FOR WHO SHE *DOES* HAVE HER EYE ON...
YOU WOULD KNOW BEST!

WELL THAT WAS JUST BY ACCIDENT ..
WAIT! YOU SAW US!?
WHEN YOU WERE WITH LUCREZIA, YOU HAD IT OFF.
DON'T SPEAK SO SARCASTICALLY TO ME
!?
WHY DID YOU REMOVE YOUR MASK?

DO YOU WANT ... LUCREZIA?
I ASKED YOU BEFORE BUT
..DO YOU LOVE LUCREZIA?

SHE S THE BORGIA TREASURE.
OR MAYBE I SHOULD SAY ITS MOST PRECIOUS PAWN.
!
I'M SORRY BUT.. I CAN'T HAND YOU OVER TO HER.
SO YOUNG AND FAIR A MAID...
.THAT EVEN YOU ARE THROWN BY HER.
SHE WILL..
...STILL PROVE OF GREAT USE TO US.
Heh

AS FOR WHO THAT IS... ALL I HAVE TO SAY IS I'M ENVIOUS OF YOU.
CESARE!
OUT-I TA MY WAY!
THAT'S
HOW YOU REALLY FEEL?
!

WHACK
CESARE!
HAVE YOU NOT AN OUNCE OF HUMAN SYMPATHY WITHIN YOU!?
!
IF INSTEAD I WERE TO...
...KEEP A CLOSE RELATIONSHIP WITH HER...
...WOULDN'T THAT JUST BE ANSWERING LUCREZIA'S LONG-CHERISHED DREAM?

SO...
..WON'T YOU JUST BE TAKING ADVANTAGE OF THAT!?
SO... SO..!
THAT POOR GIRL SAID SHE'D BE WILLING TO SACRIFICE HERSELF FOR YOU!
AND IF

DON'T YOU UNDERSTAND? I COULDN'T LIVE...
.. UNDER THE CONTROL OF MY EMOTIONS
I MUST ...
...CONTINUE TO LIVE AS I DO NOW.
JUST LIKE YOU SAID
IT'S "CANTA-RELLA."

HE SAYS THAT WITH THE EYES OF A SMALL CHILD WHO'S BEEN ABANDONED...

BUT IF YOU WERE A NORMAL MAN, YOU'D BE IN SERIOUS TROUBLE RIGHT NOW.
SINCE YOU HAVE PROPERTIES WITHIN YOU THAT CAN COUNTERACT THE DEMONIC EVIL, YOU'RE FINE

CLICK
AREN'T YOU MY ALLY?

DARK-NESS
DON'T SNEER AT ME.
I'M GOING TO COOL OFF MY HEAD!

THE ONLY ONE WHO CAN LOVE YOU...
...IS ME.

CESARE...
VANO..
COME QUICK-LY.
COME TO ME.
FLUTTER
!?

VANOZZA DIED!
HOW DARE YOU TAKE HER FORM!
I--I WON'T FALL INTO YOUR GRASP!
YOU ARE NO ORDINARY HUMAN.
YOUR BODY IS AN IMPURE THING GIVEN OVER TO DEMONS.
SHUT UP. JUST SHUT UP.
WHO COULD POSSIBLY LOVE YOU?
THERE'S NO USE WANTING TO BE "HUMAN."
CAN HUMANS HEAL YOU?
THERE'S NO-BODY THAT'S RIGHT NOBODY

To be continued in Cantarella vol. 5

Since my mind is still running with tons of wild ideas of this nature and that, hold on tight to the railing and try not to fall off as we continue the crazy ride.

Since I'm the type who tries to remain sensitive to the reader's passion while composing my tale, it'd make me so happy if I could receive constructive comments via letters and such.

Also, I'm sorry that this isn't for everyone, but I'll be preparing a small gift for 10 lucky winners so my best regards! (Editor's note: This was for a contest held only in Japan.)

I received a lot of help in the creation of this manga. Nakatsuji Naoko-san, Izumi Hijiri-san, Asakura-san, Miyakoshi Wakusa-san, Kaoru Matsuri-san, Fuyutsuki Mitsuru-san, Takanashi Kenkichi-san, Hondo Mako-san, Chief Assistant Oda Ryoka and to O-call-san who lent me all that material: thank you so very much!

And to all my lovely readers, did you have fun? If so, then there is nothing else in the world that could make me happier.

August, 2002
You Higuri

I'll be waiting for your letters:

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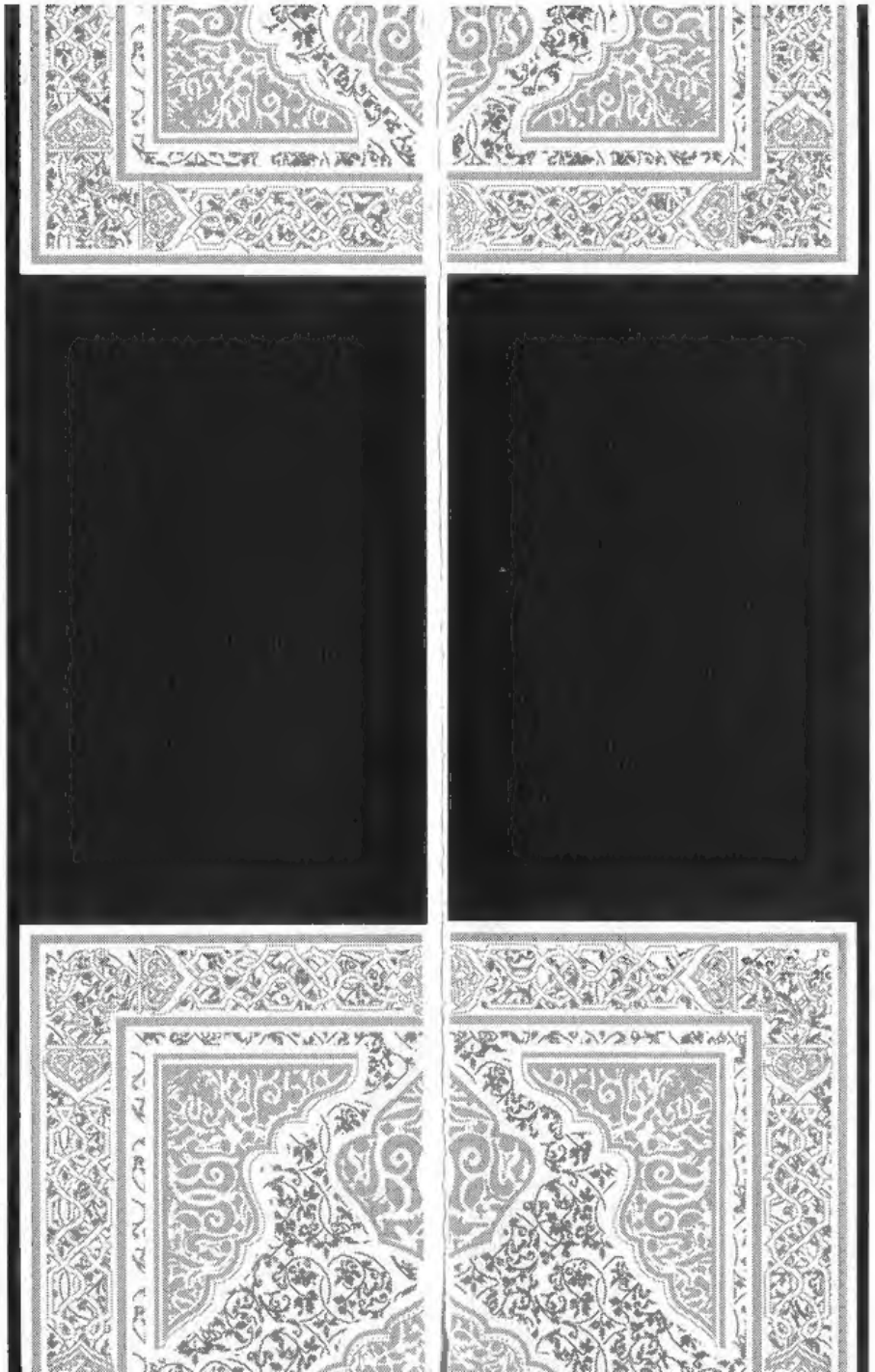
http://www.youhiguri.com



Post Script

Thank you for picking up this book! How did everybody like Cantarella's fourth volume? Even though I hate studying, making this manga took a lot of research on the Renaissance period. But the more I learned about it, the more it felt like I was untangling a complicated web of relationships and it actually got me to start thinking about things in a way that was deeper than I'd ever thought before.

In fact, even though I've traveled to Europe before, I've only just begun to see how big a gap there was between what I knew then and what I know now.

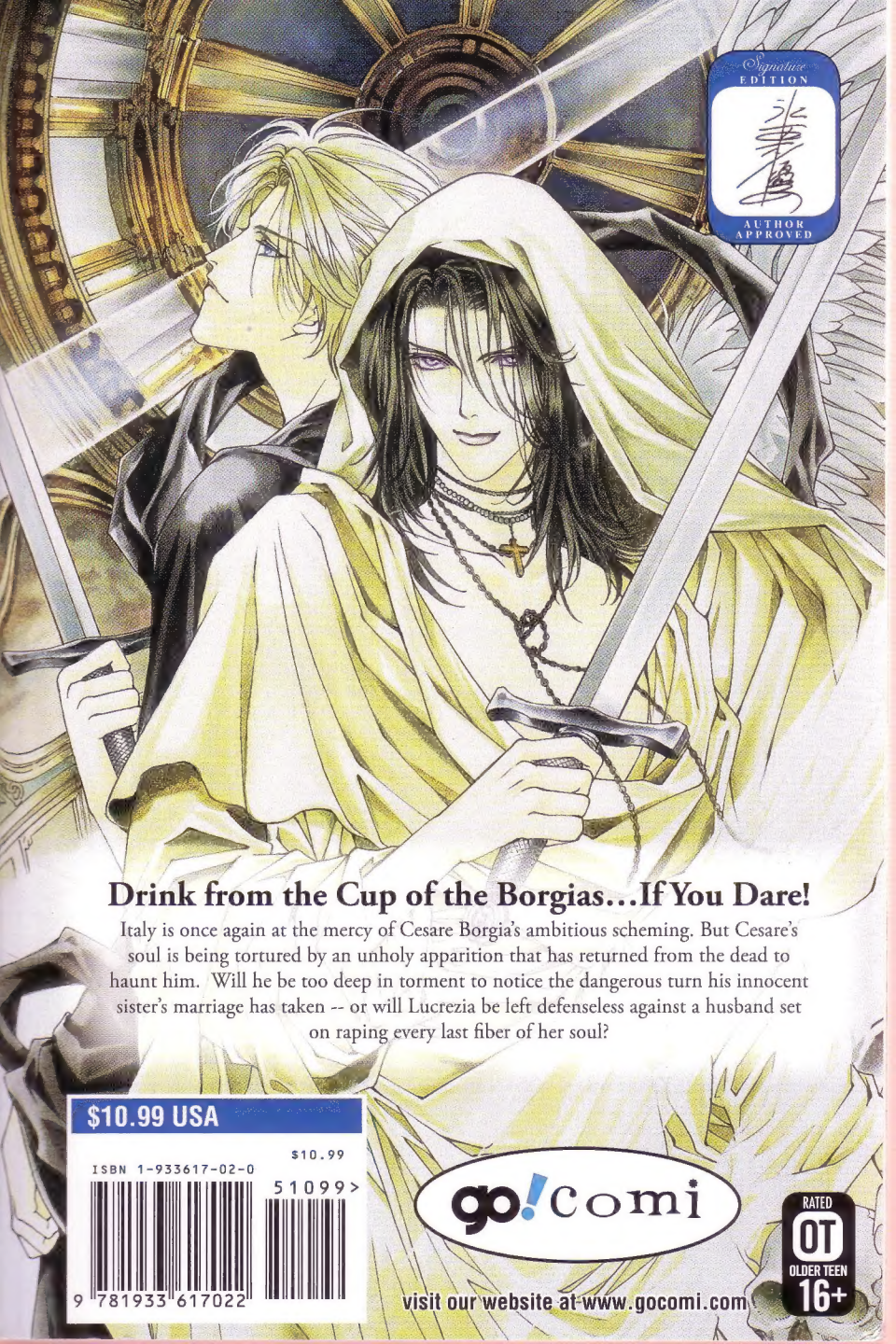
And the more I've learned, the more acutely I've begun to feel how ignorant I am... (Oh god, I'm starting to sound like that moth sorcerer.)

Anyway, now that I've thoroughly researched the matter, the tale can now unfold Higuri-style.

Various cities and territories of Italy during *Cantarella* period

(end of the 15th century)

Family Tree of the Borgia household in *Cantarella*



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